

for his crime, free medical care and issued him a border crossing card to enter the United States of America. The two agents received sentences of 11 and 12 years in prison and now spend 23 hours a day in isolated prison cells. These men are not criminals.

Our government needs to wake up and stop sending the wrong message to our Border Patrol agents and law enforcement officers who face bullets in the line of duty and risk their lives to protect the American people.

Many of us in Congress are concerned about the Federal prosecutor in this case and his decision to bring criminal charges against these border agents. There are legitimate legal questions about how this prosecution was initiated and how the U.S. Attorney's Office proceeded in this case.

I am hopeful that this Congress will soon hold hearings to investigate the prosecution of these agents, because it is time for justice to prevail over injustice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SARBANES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FUNDING WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, since Democrats took over Congress, we have tried to establish a process to responsibly end our involvement in Iraq. We, like all Americans, have watched in sadness as 3,422 of our brave soldiers have lost their lives, including 57 of those who came from the State of New Jersey.

That is why Congressman PASCRELL and Congressman PALLONE, Congressman HOLT, Congressman ROTHMAN and Congressman SIRES and myself voted against this resolution.

As we said, we have asked the President to have a responsible end to our involvement, but 3,422 deaths later, the lives of 57 Americans from New Jersey have been lost. Already we have passed and sent to the President a plan that would include a timeline for troop withdrawal.

Our best efforts, however, have been consistently met with a veto. Indeed, President Bush continues to stubbornly, recklessly insist that his failed Iraqi policy continues without any reasonable compromise. We, along with the great majority of Americans, strongly disagree with the President. He has been wrong every step of the way, and it is long past time to bring U.S. involvement in Iraq to a conclusion.

The Democratic leadership has tried repeatedly to bring finality to the war.

But because of a lack of a veto-proof majority, today they have relented on key requirements to help bring about the end.

While we understand why the proposal before us was crafted in such a way, that we believe we must continue to forcibly stand up to the President.

We voted against spending even more money in Iraq because there were no timelines or real accountability on an administration that has proven to be utterly incompetent on the most important issue of our time.

As late as yesterday at a major address, the President continues to try to directly implicate Iraq in 9/11. It was Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda, who made it very clear on that dastardly, cowardly act on September 11 to our World Trade Center that it was done by al Qaeda, done by the Saudi who led this and still continues to lead this terrorist organization.

So why do we continue to try to stretch the reason for going in and having an attack on Iraq that it was because of 9/11. We know that there is the continued attempt to connect the two when they are not connected. Now we hear al Qaeda is strong and doing well in Iraq. However, before 9/11, there were no al Qaeda operatives in Iraq.

So we have now a country that is no better off, really. More people die there. We have a world that is really not any safer. Yet, and still, we have a President who refuses to see the light, continues to go down a path of destruction. So, for that reason, I am proud of my colleagues, PASCRELL, PALLONE, HOLT, ROTHMAN, SIRES and myself who stood up and said, enough is enough, the time is now.

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my profound concern with the continued violations of religious and human rights that the Republic of Turkey has perpetrated against the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Holy See for over 300 million Orthodox faithful.

While I understand and appreciate the role Turkey must fulfill as a strategic ally in our global war on terror, I am immensely disappointed in the demonstrated lack of progress Turkey has made in support of religious tolerance.

As cochair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs and as a member of the House committees on Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security, I am extremely sensitive to nurturing the growing relationship between the United States and Turkey. The key factors in this relationship are ensuring Turkey's growth as a secular, constitutional democracy.

Americans know the conditions that characterize secular democracies must,

by necessity, include provisions for freedom of religion. While Turkey has made strides in other areas of modernization, it still fails to meet the standards of a civilized world in granting its citizens religious freedom.

We seek no extraordinary demands on Turkey, simply to allow its citizens and institutions to be free of harassment based on religion. It's as simple as that.

Like his predecessors before him, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, worldwide leader of Orthodox Christians, has made extraordinary efforts to bridge the gap between Christianity and Islam. The Patriarch, whom the Orthodox Church considers the first among equals, has been an ambassador of goodwill for the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

In fact, the Ecumenical Patriarch has been proactive in assisting Turkey's cause on the world stage. His excellency, Bartholomew, has stated that Turkey's admission into the European Union would "... provide a concrete example and a powerful symbol of mutually beneficial cooperation between the Western and Islamic worlds and put an end to the talk of the death of civilizations.

"This in turn would be a true strengthening of Europe and the European ideals that converge with the values of the 'pilgrims of the book' spoken by the current Prime Minister of Turkey."

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has a record of reaching out and working for peace and reconciliation amongst all faiths and has fostered dialogue among Christians, Jews and Muslims. What the Greek Orthodox community and all watchdogs of religious freedom throughout the world are asking for in return is simply that Turkey abides by the tenets of its constitution, which secures religious rights for all of its citizens.

In accordance with the administration's ambitious agenda over the next 2 years to further develop a U.S.-Turkey strategic relationship, I urge my fellow Members to support House Resolution 373, of which I am an original cosponsor, so that we may impress upon Turkey the need to grant the Ecumenical Patriarchate ecclesiastic succession; the right to train clergy of all nationalities; and respect for human rights and property rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

By encouraging Turkey to continue the achievements that democratization has yielded thus far for its society, we will be working to promote and safeguard religious human rights for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. For this, we and nearly 300 million Orthodox Christians would be eternally grateful.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COURTNEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.